



Jefferson Middle School 2025/26

Jefferson Instructional Council October 23rd Thursday / @ 7:00 - 7:50 in the Library		
Norms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume positive intentions 2. Take an inquiry stance 3. Ground statements in evidence 4. Stick to protocol 5. Start and end on time 6. Be here now 	Attendees: Moses /Shelton (Electives) Monika Unwin (ELA) Greg Hyzy (Math) Suzy Dunnun (Science) Monica Vigil (Social Studies) Christine Ibarra (Head Spec Ed) Ashley Griego (EA Rep) Meghan Armstrong (parent) Casey Mason (parent) Tania Hopkins (parent)	Trini Gallegos (Principal) Patricia Goke (Assistant Principal) <i>Vacancy</i> (Support Staff) J. Ploss (6th grade) Ryan Dukart (7th grade) Elizabeth Jansen (8th grade) Heather Reeves (Union) Facilitator: Mark Hedman (IC Chair) Notetaker: J. Ploss (Secretary) Timekeeper: Kate Siders (IC Vice-Chair)
Quorum requires the following attendees: 7 members, 4 teachers, 1 admin, and 1 parent		
Meeting Objective: Discussion of Big Picture initiatives from district, SLC's and IC expedited decision making process.		
To prepare for this meeting, please: Read the agenda and minutes from the previous IC meeting.		
Consensus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear bag policy: JMS went with school polling and declined to adopt a clear bag policy for 2025-2026. JMS applied for potential help from ASU (to implement proposed changes from APS in some fashion.) ● Approve minutes from the last IC meeting (9/18/25) ● Next Education Workforce Initiative and the Middle School Redesign Cohort 2 (with Arizona State University), planning this year for soft roll-out next school year ● Student-Led Conferences: Teachers can use one of 2 slideshow options (2 separate slideshows, each of which includes at the minimum: grades for each class/GPA, goal, strengths, challenges/solutions or action plan, testing scores) ● All staff union members complete a Google Form as an exit ticket at the October staff meeting to get feedback on next year's advisory schedule (2x20 minutes vs 1x40 minutes) ● IC to use a shared Google Doc to get feedback and clarification for quick turn-around needs before IC meetings in the future. 		

Take Back to Departments:

Feedback on the 6- vs 7-period day. The budget comes out in February, and we are starting the master schedule now. We need the course catalog ready by December. So we need feedback from departments on this by then.

Time:	Minutes:	Who:	Content
7:00 - 7:02	2 Minutes	Hedman	Approve minutes from the last meeting (9/18/25) Consensus to approve.
7:02 - 7:05	3 Minutes	Gallegos	Update on position vacancies. Counseling: Still open, with no applicants. Bilingual SS: We interviewed and requested an applicant. Gifted ELA: Hired someone who we hope will be released to start within a week or so. Counseling secretary is leaving, and that position is posted with 5 applicants. 1.5 gifted allocations (we already had a .5): We posted accelerated science and gifted math positions. We got one applicant and haven't gotten to start interviewing yet.
7:05 - 7:08	3 Minutes	Siders	Proposal of Monday, November 10 for NM-YRRS (New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey.) Done every 2 years as a partnership between Dept of Health and school districts. They choose which classes (12-15) are surveyed, and it will happen on their schedule. We will not be on a survey/extended advisory schedule - just a normal day. Proposal is November 10th since there is a day off the next day (maybe we can be more flexible since we might expect students to be gone but still emphasize they should be here). Question: Do we have the amount of instructional time lost due to state mandated testing? Response: No, but I can find that data Question: If students miss this, do they require makeups? Answer: No. Consensus to perform this on November 10th.

<p>7:08 - 7:18</p>	<p>10 Minutes</p>	<p>Gallegos</p>	<p>Discussion of Next Education Workforce Initiative and the Middle School Redesign Cohort 2.</p> <p>Gallegos: I explained at department meetings what this was. I applied and we did get selected. Admin will go see it in action in the classroom/schools.</p> <p>General overview: To help middle schools, this initiative is a different way of thinking about scheduling for middle schools, focusing on a cohort of students with the same teachers for content areas. Those teachers can work to schedule those chunks of time together, and collaboration time is included for those cohort teachers. There are 6 middle schools in APS already doing this, and 9 more have been selected. I talked to 4 of the 6 principals and they like it. Ms. Lazar reached out to Grant and got positive feedback from that teacher. This year is the planning phase, and the slow rollout will start next August. 9th grade is also looking at this. 10-12th grade is doing “academies”. Elementary school is not doing this.</p> <p>This is something that APS is supporting for all middle schools.</p> <p>Question: What does this look like for special education?</p> <p>Response: I don’t yet have an answer for that. In addition, some content areas may not fit in this system, so I’ll be asking that question.</p> <p>Question: How does the schedule work for this? Would it change?</p> <p>Answer: It is up to us, and that will be supported by the ASU support team.</p> <p>Question: Teachers are supposed to have content area–will they lose that in order to have cohort collaboration time?</p> <p>Answer: We plan on asking that as well.</p> <p>Question: Related to special education, how will Occupational Therapy/Speech Therapy be included in this, and can we streamline that system?</p>
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		<p>Once again, I apologize for the unorthodox timeline for a decision.</p> <p>Thank you, Mark</p> <p>From Mrs. Gallegos: The email below is an email I received that APS plans on moving forward with implementing. It requires that the IC rep to sign off on it along with the Principal, and is also due tomorrow. If we apply to be the second cohort, we will receive the support of Arizona State University. I think it would be good for us to apply for this. Will you please share this with IC, so that I can fill out the application and get your signature for it?</p> <p>I am reaching out to follow up on Dr. Mahlerwein's September 24th presentation about the Next Education Workforce Initiative and the Middle School Redesign Cohort 2.</p> <p>This program offers a concrete way to address some of the challenges we face in middle school education. It's not about adding extra work without support. This initiative provides dedicated coaching and professional learning focused on practical strategies like team-based staffing, project-based learning, and a career-connected curriculum. They'll work directly with your school to implement these models effectively.</p> <p>Instead of just talking about student-centered learning, this program provides the tools and support to actually implement it—real shifts in how we structure our schools and deliver instruction, with the potential to create more engaging and relevant learning experiences for our students.</p> <p>Specifically, the program offers:</p>
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			<p>My only concern is adding another thing onto teachers' plates. The email says that the program is about support but are there going to be requirements for teachers?</p> <hr/> <p>I agree with Suzy. What is the actual program? What are the objectives? What are the expectations for teacher participation? When and how will this fit in to our currently scheduled meetings/PD?</p> <hr/> <p>It sounds great, but are there any funds to cover substitutes while teachers are in these trainings or funds to pay teachers for their time that goes beyond their duty day or to cover missed prep. It DOES sound like additional work without more compensation from what I read.</p> <hr/> <p>To clarify this could start with one grade level and/or group of teachers. Principals have the opportunity to visit schools in Arizona to see this in action. It is a collaborative way of doing things shifting from the traditional one teacher per classroom model toward team-based staffing models. This model is built around educator teams rather than isolated individual classrooms. Some of the key ideas are to distribute expertise, shared responsibility for students; support for implementation and adaptability. This model responds to some of the challenges in education such as teacher burnout, turnover or shortages, inequitable student outcomes, lack of specialization and professional growth within the classroom and better student support.</p>
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		<p>Here are a couple of articles to explain this further.</p> <p>Next Education Workforce - Article 1</p> <p>Next Education Workforce - Article 2</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Trini</p> <hr/> <p>I see some problems that would need to be addressed, especially given that we do not have collaboration time in middle school.</p> <p>The Core Problems MCLs Become Paper-Pushers The main job of the Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL) is to coach teachers and look at student data. If they don't have scheduled time to meet with the teachers they lead, the MCL role basically fails. They'll end up being frustrated admin assistants instead of instructional leaders.</p> <p>IEPs Will Get Messy Our Special Ed students move between small groups and GE classes all the time. IEP compliance requires that the GE and SE teachers talk and plan to make sure accommodations are the same everywhere. No collaboration time means we can't align our work, which puts us at risk of violating IEPs.</p> <p>Teacher Burnout The burden of supporting the new roles and all the SE needs will likely fall entirely on the special education teachers. Since there's no official collaboration time, they'll spend all their energy putting out urgent fires instead of proactively planning. This will quickly lead to burnout for some staff.</p>
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		<p>We really need to figure out how to give our staff protected time to work together before we move ahead with this plan.</p> <p>I could be overthinking but I see IEP issues.</p> <hr/> <p>Please keep in mind that it looks different at every school, and we would need to figure out how it would look like at JMS which is where that support from ASU is useful.</p> <hr/> <p>I am for this in a slow roll out. Middle school has to change and I have found some great success in working in relationship with ELA and Science teachers. The problem like Ms. Revees stated is that we have virtually no collaboration time and special education teachers, both Cross-Cat and Gifted, need more time in their contractual hours to get everything done to not work outside of contract. I support this with a 5 to 7 period system or block schedule like how high school is. Something has to change! The current systems and structures are not sustainable and folks are burning out and some are sharing a feeling of ennui towards the profession.</p> <hr/> <p>It would be a slow roll out and would be what works best for our school.</p> <p>Trini</p> <hr/> <p>In that case, as a parent, I will go with the majority of EC members since they will be the ones potentially losing time to prep as they collaborate to integrate this new idea.</p> <hr/> <p>Hi Trini, we brought it up in the Electives meeting and concluded that it can't hurt for</p>
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		<p>you to apply for it. It's implementation would have to go through IC upon acceptance into the program, correct?</p> <hr/> <p>I think this is a great idea. I hear folks' concerns about time, it seems this model allows for a school to be more nimble with how it structure's its day, that could be an opportunity to give folks more collaboration time.</p> <p>Also, I believe a focus on project-based learning, and purpose driven instruction is exciting.</p> <p>Lastly, the opportunity to go an visit other school in another state is a great professional development opportunity. One I am honestly a bit envious of!</p> <hr/> <p>Hello Instructional Council, Please consider the Question for IC consensus below given the emails exchanged today and this background information: The current heads of the district are looking to try this program as a positive change for middle schools. This is based on feedback the district received that we need to try something different in middle schools. The current district leadership sees promise in this program and will continue with it while they are in charge. Applying for support does not guarantee that Jefferson will be accepted. If we do not apply for support through the program, then we may find ourselves in a future position of needing to implement the program without outside support. Participation could be as small as a group of teachers within a single grade level up to all grade levels in the school: it would be whatever might work best for our students here at Jefferson.</p>
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			<p>support the direction of the school and what it decides, but I feel like we needed more time to make a well-informed decision.</p> <hr/> <p>Consensus achieved for application for potential help from Arizona State University for a program being rolled out by APS.</p>
<p>7:18 - 7:28</p>	<p>10 Minutes</p>	<p>Gallegos</p>	<p>Discussion of 6 period versus 7 period schedule.</p> <p>We have had requests for a 6-period day and got push-back because of the bilingual program. We have wanted to propose moving to a 6-period day but still keep the bilingual program. Funding is an issue, because we don't have bilingual funds in our budget, so we would need support from LCE for funding. We propose that if students choose the bilingual path, they stay with it (rather than switching). What is hard is that Spanish Language Arts doesn't replace the core ELA class, so it takes up one of their electives. They would not be on the wheel in this case in 6th grade. And they wouldn't be in P.E. in 6th grade, but they could take it in 7th/8th. I think we should think about aiming our schedule to serve the majority of students, and a 6-period schedule would reduce transitions for all students.</p> <p>Class request cards: Some students didn't submit completed request cards, and we are trying to find electives for those students when they didn't let us know what they wanted.</p> <p>Electives and lab-based classes have let us know they would benefit from more time due to set-up and clean-up time.</p> <p>Grade-level requirements (P.E. year, health semester): students only have one choice due to these requirements, so that limits which they can take (because of year-long electives).</p> <p>Comment: Freshman in HS don't have options either, due to P.E. requirements, so it's consistent with that.</p>

			<p>Comment: It's important to emphasize that students choose one or 2 electives they really want, so that they are in something they chose (it may feel better when they are not able to do another elective for time).</p> <p>Proposal: Maybe we go to a full year of P.E. in 6th grade again to help them get their energy out?</p> <p>Response: They have that option, though sometimes it is hard to work with the schedule on that.</p> <p>Comment: This may reduce the variety of electives staff need to teach.</p> <p>Question: Could this situation move an elective teacher back into a core class, reducing the number of students in the classrooms?</p> <p>Response: Yes, it could. And the master schedule is based on need. Though this year we had 100 extra students that we didn't have request cards for or didn't expect.</p> <p>Request: So instead of kids picking their top 6 electives, they would pick their top 3?</p> <p>Take back to departments: Feedback on the 6- vs 7-period day. The budget comes out in February, and we are starting the master schedule now. We need the course catalog ready by December. So we need feedback from departments on this by then.</p>
7:28 - 7:38	10 Minutes	PTO	<p>Discussion of best practices for Student-Led Conferences/ Parent-Teacher Conferences at JMS.</p> <p>What we have done is that we offer virtual or in-person to families. We expect 100% attendance. Since COVID, Ms. Unwin has sent out a student-led reflection slides template which includes all classes and testing scores/grades (iMSSA will be added to that). PTO Concern is that there is not a structure across the board, so it's different from teacher to teacher. Parents want to know if we can make sure that some things are included for every teacher/SLC. They're saying some teachers don't talk about scores, and some</p>

		<p>don't do the slideshow. Teachers notice that some students don't complete the slideshow, or the student doesn't show up during the conference, so it's not usable. Though it also shows families that work completion/participation may be an issue. It can be used to guide the discussion as well. Sometimes there are issues with access to work samples students include (sharing with teacher so it's visible in the slideshow). Suggestion: Modify the slideshow so it's more minimal and/or hits the specific pieces in the slideshow. Maybe it can mimic IEPs (goals, strengths, challenges, projects they're most proud of). Students may need the structure of going through each class and reflecting, as they may not be able to reflect without that structure.</p> <p>Current SLC Slides Template: Could add a "solutions" bullet on the slides or "action plan" to improve. We could use "goal"/"action plan" instead of "challenge/solution"? Can we emphasize that students need to come with their family?</p> <p>Yes, Mrs. Gallegos sends out robo calls/emails to remind parents/guardians that students are supposed to attend with their family.</p> <p>Proposal: Can we make a checklist of important things that we all need to include in our conferences?</p> <p>Consensus: Give the 2 options (2 separate slideshows, each of which includes at the minimum: grades for each class/GPA, goal, strengths, challenges/solutions or action plan, testing scores)</p>
7:38 - 7:43	5 Minutes	<p>Hedman</p> <p>Procedures for expedited IC decision making. We might want to formalize at our IC Retreat, but a temporarily agreed upon method might be warranted.</p> <p>Proposal: We can send a Google Form with an area for comments?</p> <p>Suggestion: Would a shared Google Doc be better, so all comments are organized by department?</p>

			<p>Suggestion: Leaving a space for questions that admin can then respond to might help.</p> <p>Consensus to use a shared Google Doc to get feedback and clarification for quick turn-around needs before IC meetings.</p>
7:43 - 7:48	5 Minutes	Hedman	<p>Further departmental feedback on previous IC agenda items.</p> <p>Science: Discussed using advisory once per week for 40 minutes, and everyone supports it.</p> <p>Union: In order to do that, we have to submit a waiver that shows that 75% of union members at the school agree with that. Can admin send this form out to union members? Or can we do this at the staff meeting and make sure it's a form that can be used to prove that we have enough responses/consensus?</p> <p>Response: Yes, we can send it as an exit ticket at the staff meeting.</p> <p>Consensus to have staff union members complete a Google Form as an exit ticket at the staff meeting.</p>
7:48 - 7:50	2 Minutes	Hedman	Next Steps:
			<p>Consensus item from Instructional Council emails prior to meeting (due to a short response window)- JMS went with school polling and declined to adopt APS-provided clear backpacks/ a clear bag policy for 2025-2026.</p>

		Number of Respondents		
School Name	Parent	Staff	Student	
Jefferson Middle School	520	63	307	
Percentage of Total				
	Parent	Staff	Student	
	76.10%	98.40%	44.90%	
Parent Poll Data				
	Support	Do Not Support	No Opinion	
	32.10%	62.10%	5.80%	
Staff Poll Data				
	Support	Do Not Support	No Opinion	
	39.70%	50.80%	9.50%	
Student Poll Data				
	Support	Do Not Support	No Opinion	
	4.20%	92.50%	3.30%	